

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Foster, Susie, Log House
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 810 College Street N/A ☐ not for publication
city or town Smithville N/A ☐ vicinity
stat Tennessee code TN county DeKalb code 041 zip code 37166
e _____

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet

- ☐ determined eligible for the
National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet

- ☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register

- ☐ removed from the National
Register.

- ☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Foster, Susie, Log House

Name of Property

DeKalb County, Tennessee

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

2

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

2

1

Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single family residence

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single family residence

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone

walls Log

roof Asphalt Shingle

other Limestone, brick

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations N/A

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1946-1950

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Foster, Susie

Austin, Estel; Wallace, Merrell, builders

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

Foster, Susie, Log House
Name of Property

DeKalb County, Tennessee
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.48 acres Smithville 323 NE

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 606795 3978884
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____
☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Steve Cooper / Brian Beadles
organization Homeowner / Tennessee Historical Commission date 11/16/2006
street & number P.O. Box 840 / 2941 Lebanon Road telephone 615-597-2727
city or town Smithville / Nashville state TN zip code 37166

Additional Documentation

submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Steve and Martha Cooper
street & number P.O. Box 840 telephone 615-597-2727
city or town Smithville state TN zip code 37166

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Foster, Susie, Log House
DeKalb County, Tennessee

Narrative Description

The Susie Foster Log House is a two-story, twentieth century log house with a rectangular floor plan, side gable roof, and a brick porch and patio. A one-story guest house lies south of the main house and is attached by a small connector. The home was built in 1946-50 of logs that were salvaged from log homes that previously stood in the Caney Fork River Basin before the Center Hill Lake project began in the 1940s. The house is a good example of a Colonial Revival interpretation of a frontier log cabin. The house retains the majority of its original materials, including exposed logs, windows, and doors, and has a high level of integrity.

The house faces west on College Street in Smithville, Tennessee (pop 3,994) and is set back from the street on a small rise in a residential area. It has its original log walls, limestone foundation, wood windows and doors, and limestone fireplace. Floors throughout the house are wood. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. A pool and a second floor deck were added to the rear of the house in 1984.

The west façade has two sections. The main section has five regularly spaced bays. Each bay has a six-over-six double-hung window on the first floor and a six-pane window on the second floor. The only deviation is the middle bay, which has a six-pane window in both the first and second floors. The windows have simple wood surrounds. North of the main section is a recessed, one story, two-bay section. The northernmost bay has a six-over-six double-hung window and the southernmost bay has an original entry door. A brick patio area is in front of the entry.

The north elevation has the one story section that extends north from the main section of the house. It has a central, shouldered, limestone chimney flanked by two six-over-six double-hung windows. Paired six-pane windows and a six-over-six double-hung window are visible on the second floor of the main section of the house. Wood knee brackets are located on the gable end of the main section.

The east, or rear, elevation of the main section has a second floor wood deck that was added in 1984. The deck is supported by wood piers and is accessed by a staircase on the north half of the elevation. A railing and balustrade that form an 'x' pattern are on the outside edges of the deck. The first floor of the main section has paired six-pane windows on the south half, and two six-over-six double-hung windows on the north half. The south two bays of the second floor each have a six-over-six double-hung window. The next bay to the north has an original paneled wood door with six lights. The northernmost bay has a six-over-six double-hung window. The two northernmost bays are covered with a canvas awning. A small brick chimney is visible near the peak of the roof. North of the main section the one story section has a centered six-over-six double-hung window.

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Foster, Susie, Log House
DeKalb County, Tennessee

The south elevation of the house has a six-over-six double-hung window in the westernmost bay of the first floor. The central bay of the first floor has original paneled and glass pane double doors. A six-over-six double-hung window is in the next bay to the east. The connector between the main house and the guest house is in the easternmost bay. The second floor has three six-over-six double-hung windows. Knee brackets are on the eaves of the gable end.

The house can be entered from the door on the north end of the west façade. The door leads into the family room. The walls of the family room are log and the ceiling has beams that run north-south across the room. The floor, as in the other rooms in the house, is the original wood floor. Centered on the north wall is a limestone fireplace that supports a wood mantelshelf. Six-over-six double-hung windows flank the fireplace. The east wall has a six-over-six double-hung window and the west wall has a six-over-six double-hung window and a paneled wood door. The door and window have a simple wood surround. The floor level of the family room is slightly lower than the rest of the house. Steps lead up to the dining room and foyer to the south.

South of the family room is the foyer, which accesses the study, playroom, and kitchen. The west wall of the foyer is log. The south wall has paneled and glass pane double doors that lead outside. The staircase that leads to the second floor is on the north half of the east wall of the foyer. The staircase has a simple wood newel posts and a balustrade composed of diamond shaped and curved elements. The east wall of the foyer under the staircase has vertical wood paneling. South of the stairway a door in the east wall leads to the kitchen. The west wall has an opening that leads to the study and playroom.

The study has log walls with some vertical wood paneling on the north and south walls. The west wall has two six-over-six double-hung windows. The ceiling has wood beams that run east-west across the room. South of the study is the playroom. The playroom has two six-over-six double-hung windows on the west wall and a single six-over-six double-hung window on the south wall. The walls are log and beams in the ceiling run east-west across the room. The study and playroom are separated by a small bathroom. The bathroom has modern fixtures and wood panel walls.

An opening on the south end of the east wall of the foyer leads to the kitchen. The kitchen has been updated with modern appliances and counters. Wood cabinets line the east wall, interrupted only by paired six-pane windows. In the center of the room is an island with cabinets and a stove. A wood paneled door with nine panes on the south wall leads to the guest house, and an opening in the north wall leads to the dining room. Walls in the kitchen are finished with vertical wood panels.

The south and west walls of the dining room have vertical wood paneling. The other walls are log. The ceiling has wood beams that run east-west across the room. The beams in the living room came from the home of Absalom Reams, the first Methodist minister in DeKalb County after the

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Foster, Susie, Log House
DeKalb County, Tennessee

Civil War. Two six-over-six double-hung windows are in the east wall. An opening in the north wall leads to the family room.

The second floor originally served as an apartment with its own kitchen. In 1984 the kitchen was transformed into a master bathroom and the space ceased to be used as an apartment. The second floor has exterior access through a door in the east wall of the upstairs bedroom. The upstairs bedroom has log walls, except the south and west walls, which have vertical wood paneling. The north and east walls each has a six-over-six double-hung window. Wood beams run east-west across the ceiling of the room. A wood panel door at the south end of the west wall leads to a hallway and the top of the staircase.

A door on the west wall of the hall leads to bedroom #2. The walls have wood paneling except the west wall which is log. Paired six-pane windows are in the north wall. The ceiling slopes down to the west wall, which has two six-pane windows. South of bedroom #2 is a small bathroom. The bathroom has modern fixtures and cabinets and a tile floor.

South of the bathroom is the master bedroom. The north wall of the master bedroom has wood paneling and the other walls are log. The ceiling slopes down to the west wall, which has two six-pane windows. The ceiling and floor are both wood. East of the master bedroom is the master bathroom. This space was originally a kitchen and was made into a bathroom in 1984. The walls and ceiling have drywall. The floors are covered with tiles. The east wall has two six-over-six double-hung windows and the south wall has one window of the same type.

South of the house is the front gabled guest house and connector. The guest house was built at the same time as the main house, and a small connector was added in 2005. The connector is recessed from the façade of the guest house and has a side gable roof with a six-over-six double-hung window and multi-paned entry door. The guest house is a contributing resource.

The south façade of the guest house has a centered entry with simple wood trim. This façade has no other windows or doors.

The west elevation of the guest house has a six-over-six double-hung window and a six-pane window on the first floor, and a six-pane window in the attic space. A brick patio area extends west from the connector and guest house. The east elevation of the guest house has a set of three four-pane windows and a six-over-six double-hung window on the first floor. A six-pane window is in the attic space.

The guest house has log walls, wood floors and wood ceilings. The south half serves as a bedroom, and there is a small kitchen/laundry area in the north half. A door in the north wall opens to the small connector that leads to the main house.

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Foster, Susie, Log House
DeKalb County, Tennessee

Southeast of the house is a two car garage that was built in 1999. The garage has a side-gabled roof covered with metal, and the walls have board and batten siding. The south two bays of the west façade are open. The north bay has double doors that access a storage area. The garage is non-contributing due to its date of construction.

The Susie Foster Log House retains a high level of integrity. It has its original log walls, wood windows, doors, floors, and ceilings. Updates made to the kitchen and bathroom spaces and the connector are minor and do not detract from the overall integrity of the property.

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Foster, Susie, Log House
DeKalb County, Tennessee

Statement of Significance

The Susie Foster Log House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C as an unusual and intact local example of a twentieth century log house that was constructed solely of materials that were salvaged from other buildings. Built between 1946-50 the majority of the materials were taken from log buildings that were to be inundated by the Center Hill Dam project. Materials were also taken from the Absalom Reams House formerly located on Short Mountain, and from the Webb Hotel, a fifteen room, antebellum hotel in Smithville that was torn down in 1948. The Susie Foster Log House retains its original materials and has a high level of integrity. With its exposed logs on the exterior and interior, original mantel, windows, and doors, it exemplifies the twentieth century Colonial Revival movement.

Susie Foster (1892-1984) received the lot on which the house now stands c. 1915 from her cousin with the intention of building herself a dream log house. Many years passed without any building activity on the site. The dream of building a log house began to fade a little and c. 1930 Miss Susie, as she was known locally, purchased a quantity of used bricks in Nashville. Apparently she reconsidered the notion of building a brick house as these bricks were not used in the construction of the house. Then c. 1945 she purchased the Absalom Reams House on Short Mountain, the first of many log homes that she would purchase. The Reams House became the nucleus of her home.¹ Absalom Reams (1821-1900) was a locally prominent Methodist minister in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Also at this time, plans were underway for the construction of the Center Hill Dam on the Caney Fork River. Construction of the dam would inundate a large area and many homes would be lost. This provided a great opportunity for Miss Susie to obtain a variety of log buildings. As plans for the dam progressed Miss Susie traveled through the area to be flooded and bought several log buildings for use in her home. She had each house dismantled and the materials delivered to the site of her home. Construction on the dam was completed in 1948. The dam created a reservoir that extends 64 river miles and has 415 miles of shoreline.²

Construction on the house began in 1946 when the basement was dug. She then hired Estel Austin and Merrell Wallace to build the log house. Mr. Austin had previous experience with log buildings. He had built several log buildings at a summer camp in Bon Air, Tennessee. Miss Susie along with her brother worked on the interior finishes. Progress on the construction of the house was reportedly very slow as logs from different buildings were fit together. Also, at one point during the construction the plans for the height of the house were changed to accommodate a full second story.³ This second story was used as a separate apartment that was rented out.

¹ "Miss Susie Foster Realizes Dream After Thirty Years Work", *Smithville Review*. February 12, 1953.

² www.smithvilletn.com, website accessed April 6, 2007.

³ *Smithville Review*. February 12, 1953.

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Foster, Susie, Log House
DeKalb County, Tennessee

In 1948 the Webb Hotel, a fifteen room hotel that had stood on the town square in Smithville, was torn down by Miss Susie's brother-in-law. He allowed Miss Susie to salvage materials from the hotel. Many of the interior features of the house are remnants of the hotel, including doors, windows, floors, and the staircase. The guest house was reportedly built as an after thought; the result of an overabundance of logs having been brought to the site.⁴

In the 1920s and 30s it became increasingly popular for people who desired to own a historic building to move one onto their desired site. A good example of this trend is seen in the Mary Felice Ferrell House in Sumner County, Tennessee (NR 4/14/1992). In this example a series of log buildings were moved to the site and reassembled to form a 'modern' complex of old buildings. It endeavored to serve as a twentieth century interpretation of Colonial life. This was seen as an early form of historic preservation that was made popular by Colonial Williamsburg. The Foster House differs in that the deconstructed log buildings were not reassembled in their original configuration. Instead the materials from a variety of buildings were used to form a new building with modern conveniences, but the romanticized charm of a traditional frontier log house.

Log houses have been widely romanticized since the nineteenth century. They have come to represent the frontier ideals of self-sufficiency and perseverance with tales told of the humble log cabin beginnings of presidents and other leaders. In the final decades of the nineteenth century log buildings took on a grander scale as 'rustic' vacation retreats for the upper classes in popular retreat areas such as the Adirondacks and Yellowstone Park. Identification with frontier ideals along with the modern need for up to date conveniences led to an increased popularity of log buildings and Colonial Revival styles in the first half of the twentieth century.

The Colonial Revival style of the mid twentieth century often lacks the degree of ornamentation seen in earlier examples of the style. Whereas pre-World War I Colonial Revival houses often had a greater infusion of Victorian era characteristics including exaggerated ornamentation and irregular massing, later examples contained fewer elaborations and reflected more the characteristics of earlier Colonial architecture. The Foster Log House reflects this trend as it does not have elaborate ornamentation. Trim on the exterior and interior is simple.

Since the materials used in the construction were salvaged from early and relatively simple log house there were basic limitations on the amount of ornamentation that could be applied in the house. However the use of these materials was not used in an attempt to faithfully recreate a frontier log house. Instead the materials were used to form a modern and romanticized interpretation of a frontier home and lifestyle.

⁴ Letter written by Thomas Webb, DeKalb County Historian dated September 1, 1999.

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Foster, Susie, Log House
DeKalb County, Tennessee

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"Miss Susie Foster Realizes Dream After Thirty Years Work," *Smithville Review*, February 12, 1953.

Morgan, John. *The Log House in East Tennessee*. The University of Tennessee Press: Knoxville, TN, 1990.

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Webb, Thomas G., Dekalb County Historian, Letter to Tennessee Department of Transportation, September 1, 1999.

www.smithvilletn.com, website accessed April 6, 2007.

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Foster, Susie, Log House
DeKalb County, Tennessee

Boundary Description and Justification

The proposed boundary is the lot labeled as parcel 005.00 on tax map 073D. This boundary represents the area currently and historically associated with the Susie Foster Log House. According to the map the lot is 2.2 acres, but according to the warranty deed the lot is 2.48 acres.



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Foster, Susie, Log House
DeKalb County, Tennessee

Photos

Photographs by Steve Cooper
May, 2007

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 1 of 20 | West façade, photographer facing east. |
| 2 of 20 | North elevation, photographer facing south. |
| 3 of 20 | East elevation, photographer facing west. |
| 4 of 20 | South elevation, photographer facing north. |
| 5 of 20 | South façade of guest house, photographer facing north. |
| 6 of 20 | Family room, photographer facing north. |
| 7 of 20 | Foyer, photographer facing north. |
| 8 of 20 | Foyer and stairwell, photographer facing south. |
| 9 of 20 | Study, photographer facing northwest. |
| 10 of 20 | Playroom, photographer facing south. |
| 11 of 20 | Downstairs bathroom, photographer facing west. |
| 12 of 20 | Kitchen, photographer facing southeast. |
| 13 of 20 | Dining room, photographer facing north. |
| 14 of 20 | Stairwell, photographer facing north. |
| 15 of 20 | Upstairs bedroom 1, photographer facing northeast. |
| 16 of 20 | Upstairs bedroom 2, photographer facing northeast. |
| 17 of 20 | Upstairs bathroom, photographer facing west. |
| 18 of 20 | Master bedroom, photographer facing northwest. |

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Foster, Susie, Log House
DeKalb County, Tennessee

19 of 20 Master bathroom, photographer facing east.

20 of 20 Interior of guest house, photographer facing east.